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R 100932Z OCT 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8520
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL DANANG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8114

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: CO GONG PROVINCE

REF: SAIGON 6732

1. OF THE FOURTEEN CANDIDATES WHO ORIGINALLY FILED FOR THE ONE VIETNAMESE SEAT FROM GO CONG, SIX HAVE WITHDRAWN OR BEEN REJECTED. MOST SIGNIFICANT WITHDRAWAL IS THAT OF BANH NGOC QUI, MOVEMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE OF THE SOUTH (MRS) LEADER WHO WON GO CONG'S CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SEAT. REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR, BUT ONE POSSIBILITY QUI'S STRONG SUPPORT OF HUONG IN SEPTEMBER 3 ELECTION

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AND CONTINUING ANTI-GVN STANCE RESULTED IN SUCH STRONG

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GOVERNMENT OPPOSITION TO HIS PRESENT CANDIDACY THAT HE REALIZED VICTORY IMPOSSIBLE AND WITH DREW, POSSIBLY IN FAVOR OF NGUYEN VAN NGON. IT HAS ALSO BEEN SAID THAT QIO JEOPARDIZED HIS CHANCES BY NEGLECTING HIS CONSTITUENTS DURING HIS YEAR IN SAIGON.

2. OTHER CANDIATES WHO WITHDREW OR HAD INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION (BASIC BIO DATE ON ALL THOSE INITIALLY FILING REPORTED REFTEL).

BUI TAN BUU - WITHDREW
NGUYEN VAN HIEN - WITHDREW
CAO VAN TAM - INSUFFICIENT DECUMENTATION
HA HUY DINH - INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION

3. PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES ARE:

A. NGUYEN VAN NGON - ANCESTOR WORSHIPPER. SAID TO HAVE QUI'S SUPPORT NOW THAT LATTER HAS WITHDRAWN. BOTH ARE YOUNG TEACHERS, AND NGON CAN BE EXPECTED TO USE STUDENT GROUPS AS QUI DID IN HIS 1966 CA CAMPAIGN. BOTH ARE SOUTHERN NATIONALISTS, ALTHOUGH NGON IS NOT MRS

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MEMBER LIKE QUI. NGON ALSO SAID TO HAVE SOME CAO DAI SUPPORT. NGON IS IMPRESSIVE INTELLECTUAL PRESENTLY WORKING ON PHD IN ECONOMICS.

B. NGUYEN MINH HUAN - BUDDHIST. CHAIRMAN OF PROVINCE COUNCIL. RAN SECOND IN CA ELECTIONS, AND WAS REPRESENTATIVE FOR THIEU-KY IN GO CONG. HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN LABOR AFFAIRS, AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO DRAW SOME SUPPORT FROM THIS SECTOR. GENERALLY CONCEDED TO BE A LEADING CANDIDATE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS CRITICISM OF HIS "COLLABORATION" WITH GOVERNMENT.

C. HUYNH KHAC VANG - WEALTHY LOCAL MERCHANT. BUDDHIST. SAID TO HAVE ORGANIZED AN EXTENSIVE CAMPAIGN.

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D. NGUYEN VAN LE - ALSO WEALTHY. BORN IN GO CONG, BUT NOW RESIDENT IN SAIGON.

4. OTHER CANDIDATES OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE:

A. (MRS.) VO THI QUYEN - LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER. SAID TO HAVE RELATIVES WITH VC SYMPATHIES. ALSO MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE RECIPIENT OF CAO DAI SUPPORT.

B. PHAM VAN TIEP - CATHOLIC. EMPLOYEE OF GO CONG COURT.

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5. HUAN IS PROBABLY LEADING CONTENDER FOR GO CONG SEAT. WITH QUI OUT OF RACE, HUAN IS ONLY PROVEN VOTE GETTER. HOWEVER, THERE IS MUCH TALK ABOUT NGON'S CHANCES, SO RACE COULD VERY WELL BE BETWEEN THESE TWO, WITH VANG AND LE CONTENDERS WITH LESS CHANCE.

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